



The Presidential Candidates on Transportation

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Federal actions and policies on transportation matters affect everyone; their importance cannot be overstated. One out of every seven jobs in the United States is directly based on transportation;¹ while it contributes towards approximately 10% of the nation's gross domestic product.²

Every four years, *TransLaw* strives to obtain and publish in a special edition the positions of the presidential candidates on key transportation matters. *TransLaw* has obtained the following information and provides it for the benefit of our members as well as the general public.

Creating an Economy Built to Last Through a 21st Century Transportation System

Statement provided by Kelley Greenman for the Barack Obama 2012 Presidential Campaign.

After losing 800,000 jobs a month when I took office, businesses have now added 5.2 million new jobs over the past two and a half years and the unemployment rate this month to its lowest level since I took office, but we still have more to do. I believe that this is a time when we should be doing everything in our power—Democrats and Republicans—to keep our economic recovery moving forward.

So much of America's infrastructure is in need of repair. Our bridges are deteriorating after years of neglect. Highways are choked with congestion. Transportation delays cost Americans and businesses billions of dollars every year. And there are hundreds of thousands of construction workers who have never been more eager to get back on the job. We need roads, railways, and ports that deliver American products around the world.

I will rebuild our roads, bridges and railways to help American businesses sell their products across the country and the world. It's time for some nation-building here at home, and I will pay for these investments with half of the savings achieved by ending the war in Iraq and drawing down our military presence in Afghanistan. And my American Jobs Act will create jobs with immediate investments repairing our roads, bridges, airports, and schools, which would put hundreds of thousands of construction workers back to work now and strengthen our economy for the long term. Republicans in Congress—led by Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan—have been blocking my proposals, leaving as many as one million jobs on the table.

President Obama provided a statement of his transportation accomplishments and related vision for the future. Governor Romney's representatives were unable to provide a statement by press time, so *TransLaw* has directly excerpted relevant information from the GOP party platform, *Republican Platform 2012* at pp. 5-6.³ ❖

The views expressed herein do not represent the views of the Federal Bar Association, the Transportation and Transportation Security Law Section, or any federal agency or employee.

Infrastructure: Building the Future

Source: Republican Platform 2012

America's infrastructure networks are critical for economic growth, international competitiveness, and national security. Infrastructure programs have traditionally been non-partisan; everyone recognized that we all need clean water and safe roads, rail, bridges, ports, and airports. The current administration has changed that, replacing civil engineering with social engineering as it pursues an exclusively urban vision of dense housing and government transit. In the vaunted stimulus package, less than six percent of the funds went to transportation, with most of that to cosmetic "shovel-ready" projects rather than fundamental structural improvements. All the while, the Democrats' Davis-Bacon law continues to drive up infrastructure construction and maintenance costs for the benefit of that party's union stalwarts.

What most Americans take for granted—the safety and availability of our water supply—is in perilous condition. Engineering surveys report crumbling drinking water systems, aging dams, and overwhelmed wastewater infrastructure. Investment in these areas, as well as with levees and inland waterways, can renew communities, attract businesses, and create jobs. Most importantly, it can assure the health and safety of the American people.

The nation's ports have become a bottleneck in international trade. America's exporters sometimes use Canadian ports in order to reach the world market in a timely manner. With the widening of the Panama Canal, our east coast and Gulf ports have an extraordinary opportunity to boost container traffic but require major improvement to remain competitive receivers of large vessels.

Interstate infrastructure has long been a federal

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TRANSPORTATION *continued from page 1*

We are already taking steps to restore the aging infrastructure and make investments to improve and expand a 21st century transportation system. My administration recently announced \$500 million in competitive funding for states and communities that will create construction jobs on projects like road and port renovation. We have also made historic investments in a national high speed and intercity passenger rail network, as a part of our goal of providing 80 percent of Americans access to high-speed rail within 25 years.

We are making progress and putting forward proposals to ensure that our highways are safe and secure. Today, highway fatalities are the lowest since 1949—and yet over 30,000 lives are still lost on our nation’s highways. I have proposed a record level of investment in safety. This administration is also raising awareness on the issue of distracted driving, as technologies of cell phones, GPS, and other handheld devices have contributed to a pressing safety issue.

And since my earliest days in office, I have taken steps to make our transportation system cleaner and more efficient and save drivers money at the pump. My administration worked with the auto industry to develop a historic agreement on fuel efficiency standards that will nearly double the fuel economy of our cars and light trucks. By 2025, this will save consumers more than \$8,000 in fuel costs over the lifetime of their new, fuel efficient car, reduce oil consumption by an estimated 2.2 million barrels a day, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. And thanks to our significant investments in advanced vehicle technologies, we’re putting Americans back to work building fuel-efficient and hybrid electric vehicles that will give consumers even more options when it comes to renting or purchasing safe and fuel-efficient cars that save them money at the pump.

I have called for an independent, non-partisan infrastructure bank that would end boondoggles and leverage private capital to support major infrastructure projects based on merit. Led by infrastructure and financial experts, the bank would offer broad eligibility and merit-based selection for large-scale transportation, water, and energy infrastructure projects. Projects would have a clear public benefit, meet rigorous economic, technical and environmental standards, and be backed by a dedicated revenue stream. Republicans in Congress have blocked progress here too—preventing the NIB from moving forward and putting electoral politics ahead of good public policy.

An excellent system of transportation is an important competitive advantage for America. But we can do better. Increased investment to provide travelers greater choice on how to get where they are going, reduce travel costs to households, and spur economic development through more efficient commerce and private investment. And I will keep doing just that. ❖

INFRASTRUCTURE *continued from page 1*

responsibility shared with the states, and a renewed federal-state partnership and new public-private partnerships are urgently needed to maintain and modernize our country’s travel lifelines to facilitate economic growth and job creation. In the last two years, Congressional Republicans have taken the lead with initiatives like the FAA Modernization and Reform Act; the Pipeline Safety, Regulatory Certainty, and Job Creation Act; and the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act. The recent highway bill reforming the federal highway program included some key reforms. It will shorten the project approval process, eliminate unnecessary programs, and give states more flexibility to address their particular needs. It is a return to the principles of federalism, and it contains not a single earmark. It should be followed by reform of the 42-year old National Environmental Policy Act to create regulatory certainty for infrastructure projects, expedite their timetables, and limit litigation against them.

Securing sufficient funding for the Highway Trust Fund remains a challenge given the debt and deficits and the need to reduce spending. Republicans will make hard choices and set priorities, and infrastructure will be among them. In some states with elected officials dominated by the Democratic Party, a proportion of highway funds is diverted to other purposes. This must stop. We oppose any funding mechanism that would involve governmental monitoring of every car and truck in the nation.

Amtrak continues to be, for the taxpayers, an extremely expensive railroad. The public has to subsidize every ticket for nearly \$50. It is long past time for the federal government to get out of way and allow private ventures to provide passenger service to the northeast corridor. The same holds true with regard to high-speed and intercity rails across the country. ❖

Endnotes

¹Bureau of Transportation Statistics, *Economic Impact on Transportation*, available at www.bts.gov/programs/freight_transportation/html/transportation.html.

²US Census Bureau, *The 2012 Statistical Abstract: The National Data Book*, Section 1063, *Transportation-Related Components of U.S. Gross Domestic Product*, available at www.census.gov/compendia/statab/cats/transportation.html.

³Republic Platform 2012, pp. 5-6, available at www.gop.com/2012-republican-platform_home/.

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